UNITED NATIONS

General Assembly

FORTY-NINTH SESSION

Official Records

THIRD COMMITTEE
19th meeting
held on
Thursday, 3 November 1994
at 10 a.m.
New York

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 19th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. CISSE (Senegal)

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AGENDA ITEM 98: INTERNATIONAL DRUG CONTROL (continued)

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Distr. GENERAL
A/C.3/49/SR.19
18 November 1994

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

94-81989 (E)

The meeting was called to order at 10.25 a.m.

AGENDA ITEM 98: INTERNATIONAL DRUG CONTROL (continued) (A/49/89, A/49/139-E/1994/57, A/49/228-S/1994/827, A/49/287-S/1994/894 and Corr.1, A/49/317, 345, 369, 422, 532)

1. Mr. MANCZYK (Poland) welcomed the call for increased international cooperation in drug control. In that regard, UNDCP had a special coordinating and catalytic role to play, which was all the more important, given the current spread and diversification of drug problems and the emergence of a global network of drug-related organized crime. In order to fulfil its task, the Programme required the assistance of other international organizations, enhanced cooperation with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the support of other United Nations agencies. The arrangement concluded between UNDP and UNDCP, which had defined the functions of UNDCP representatives in the field was particularly welcome.

2. The importance of national drug strategies, with each Government setting its own priorities, must not be overlooked. Efforts should also be made to reduce the non-medical application of drugs, since legal loopholes were readily exploited by black-market operators. Close international cooperation and the full implementation of obligations under the relevant international instruments was now essential. For that reason Poland supported the efforts of UNDCP to assist States in drawing up the measures required for ratification of the United Nations Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances of 1988.

3. Poland was now a party to all the relevant international conventions on narcotic drugs. It had also made considerable progress in adapting national legislation to cover matters such as control of precursors, money-laundering and mutual legal assistance. Its future efforts would be much more effective following the establishment of an interministerial coordinating task force for drug control chaired by the Deputy Prime Minister. The task force was already coordinating action in the areas of prevention, treatment and rehabilitation, law-enforcement legislation and information. A schedule for enacting the relevant legislation had also been prepared. Pursuant to the 1988 Convention, Poland intended to introduce penalties for the possession of illicit drugs, and a seminar on the subject had been held in cooperation with the Council of Europe.

4. International efforts were now focusing increasingly on demand reduction, and the first step was to assess the scale of the problem; the involvement of local non-governmental organizations was also necessary. Poland supported inclusion of the topic of educational programmes, the healthy life-styles and community development in the agenda for the next session of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs. The consideration of demand reduction, prevention strategies and interaction between law enforcement and medical services should provide a useful basis for exchanging experience and promoting effective action plans.

5. His delegation was convinced that greater attention to combating drug abuse would reduce addiction. None the less, such programmes must be supported by action in other social spheres. In particular, Poland favoured law-enforcement programmes and close cooperation between the Commission on Narcotic Drugs and the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice. Drug abuse, as a global and multifaceted phenomenon, called for world-wide multidisciplinary action.

6. Mrs. LIMJUCO (Philippines) said that in the reports on agenda item 98 she would have welcomed more information on the gains achieved in drug control during the reporting period. The 1990s had brought uncertainty and upheaval which had impaired the capacity of many States to take unilateral or collective action to combat the drug menace. As a result, the number of people vulnerable to drug addiction had increased. The problem even threatened the political, economic and social stability of nations world wide.

7. The Executive Director of UNDCP had made a number of noteworthy points in his introductory statement. The drug problem was global and consequently an international effort was required to contain it. None the less, coordinated action at national level was essential in order to dovetail national and international policies and to ensure that appropriate priority and adequate resources were allocated to the drug problem. The drug threat must be addressed from the political, economic, social, medical and developmental standpoints. But success depended on the political will of each State, and all international programmes must be built on national resolve.

8. The Philippines had declared war on drugs and, although drug abuse and illicit trafficking were still a matter of grave concern, some innovative and effective work had been carried out on preventive aspects and rehabilitation. Notwithstanding, the problem persisted in the country because of high population density in urban centres, the proximity of drug sources, the country's peculiar geography and strategic location in South-East Asia, and logistics problems common to many developing countries.

9. The Philippines drugs strategy hinged on the twin concepts of keeping abusers away from drugs and keeping drugs away from abusers. It had two components. The first was a legislative and regulatory programme aimed at reducing the availability of dangerous drugs. The second was an enforcement programme intended, inter alia, to eradicate cannabis plantations, prevent the importation of illicit drugs through rigid customs enforcement, and coordinate action with foreign counterpart agencies in order to identify and neutralize trafficking syndicates; the programme also covered treatment, rehabilitation, preventive education, training and information. Noting the growing importance of regional cooperation, she said that a declaration of principles on drug abuse control adopted by the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN) had ensured active cooperation among its members and agencies.

10. Referring to the Secretary-General's report (A/49/139-E/1994/57) on the System-Wide Action Plan on Drug Abuse Control, she drew attention to several agency-specific implementation plans of particular merit. The project of the

United Nations Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute on women's leadership in education on drug abuse in Mediterranean countries could be usefully emulated in other regions. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) was to be commended on its activities targeted at young people, with the accent on preventive education.

11. The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) was doing valuable work in remote sensing to identify illicit crop cultivation. The Philippines looked forward to its plan to focus on specific areas, including South-East Asia, but acknowledged that, in the long run, illicit crop cultivation must be tackled under integrated alternative rural development programmes. The inclusion of a drug dimension in the economic sectoral work of the World Bank was encouraging and would help to reduce illicit crops in drug-producing countries. The International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) should also pursue its poverty alleviation programmes in areas where narcotic drugs were cultivated. It was important, in that respect, that developed countries provided markets for products in order to encourage crop substitution.

12. The Philippine Government remained ready to provide assistance in creating and maintaining a readily accessible database on programmes planned and under way within the United Nations system and by bilateral, regional and multilateral organizations. It would also assist in technical cooperation activities in especially vulnerable countries such as transit States and those targeted by drug traffickers.

The meeting rose at 10.45 a.m.